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THE PATRIOT



Vol 1, Issue 11

A CJTF-76 Publication

October 1, 2005

Afghans vote for future in successful elections

By Sgt. Maj. Larry Lane
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD – The people of Afghanistan woke up Sept. 19 to a brighter future, after successfully voting in their new leadership in a day marked by limited violence near only a handful of voting stations.

Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and international military forces ensured more than 12.5 million registered voters had an opportunity to participate in the National Assembly Elections in a relatively safe and secure environment.

Jahwedolah, an ANP patrolman said, “It’s a historical day that we have today ... it will be good for our future, and we will have a good future.”

“The election results will not be known for several weeks,” said Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya, Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force 76. “However, we believe the real winners in this process are the people of Afghanistan who courageously took a stand against years of violence and oppression and took a major step forward toward peace and prosperity.”

“Let there be no doubt that the success of the National Assembly Election has strengthened the resolve and commitment of U.S. and Coalition Forces. We will relentlessly continue security operations, in partnership with Afghan National Security Forces, to keep the enemy on the defensive and to continue to bring security, reconstruction and development to the Afghan people on behalf of their central government.”

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Signifying her vote, an Afghan woman proudly displays her ink-stained finger Sept. 18 in Lashkar Gah, Hilmand Province. (Photo by 1st Sgt. Stephanie Hika, TF Bayonet Public Affairs)

Like father, like son - 25 years later

**Story and photo by
Spc. Mike Pryor**
1/325th Public Affairs

LOGAR – For years Afghanistan was a place Aleksey Ivanovich Butkov just wanted to forget.

Butkov, a truck driver who lives in Portland, Oregon, fought there as a soldier in the Russian Army during the early 1980’s and left sick of war. He tried to put Afghanistan behind him, as the years passed. When Aleksey Alekseyevich, his

first-born son, grew old enough to ask him questions about the war, Aleksey Sr., would just change the subject.

Now Afghanistan is at the front of his mind once again. The same son who used to ask him questions about the war is now Pfc.

Aleksey Alekseyevich Butkov. He is serving in Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom with the 82nd Airborne Division. Like his father,

Aleksey Jr. is a driver.

“I don’t know if it’s in the blood

or destiny, but it’s a pretty weird coincidence. He did it 25 years ago with his Army and I’m doing it 25 years later in this Army. It’s pretty cool. It’s something me and my dad have in common,” Aleksey, Jr. said.

The Butkov’s military service in Afghanistan may have brought them together, but the paths that brought them both to serve there were very different.

Aleksey Sr. was born in 1964

**“He did it 25 years ago
with his Army, and I’m doing
it 25 years later in this
Army.”**

**- Pfc. Aleksey Alekseyevich
Butkov**

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Voting Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76



A voter proudly displays his finger after voting in Moraqkhja. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Ken Denny, Freedom Watch).

Election Success

ELECTION from Page 1

Afghanistan's Security Forces include 30,000 ANA and 50,000 ANP. Together they provide security and participate in operations designed to quell any resurgence of Taliban or other terrorist organizations.

"For three decades, everything has come apart and been destroyed by war. No one had the freedom to vote for the president or the National Assembly. So today is the day we vote...it's a very important day," Said Asem explained at a polling site in Parwan Sept. 18.

Mazi Rashidi, another voter from the same area added, "We vote today for candidates to the National Assembly. And when we have problems in the village or the district, these elected representatives will take those problems to the government."

Since Afghanistan's last successful election, when the Afghan majority democratically elected President Hamad Karzai into office, the strength of the government has increased. It will only grow stronger as it will now be fueled by legitimately elected provincial representation from across Afghanistan.



(Clockwise) - Voters in Habdullma Lek Village of the Parwan Province hold signs up promoting their choice for the parliament. - Voters in Habdullma Lek Village, in the Parwan Province, cast their ballots. -



An election worker displays his worker identification and ink stained finger. - A voter puts his finger in ink to start the voting process. Women voters wait in line to cast their vote in Lashkar Gah. (Photo by 1st Sgt. Stephanie Hika, TF Bayonet Public Affairs).



An Afghan woman receives ballots for the elections in Lashkar Gah. (Photo by 1st Sgt. Stephanie Hika, TF Bayonet Public Affairs).



Voting Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

Huge strides demonstrated during Afghan elections

Task Force Bayonet troops reflect back to beginning of deployment

Story by Spc. Jon Arguello
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

QALAT – As Afghans in Zabul await the results of the first parliamentary elections in 30 years, the central government and Coalition forces are left reflecting on the magnitude of the momentous strides the Afghan authorities in Southern Afghanistan have made since Task Force Bayonet arrived in March.

The days preceding the elections, Coalition forces in Zabul were tense as they prepared to deal with insurgent attempts to undermine the government's progress and hinder the elections process. Coalition forces quickly realized however that the province's governmental agencies have leaped forward in terms of security and assuming responsibility.

"The elections really went well from my perspective," said Charles Wintermeyer, a credentialed elections observer for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and U.S. State Department official permanently stationed in the Qalat PRT. "All elections officials I observed were professional and conscientious and took pride in doing a good job in an important event."

Not only did the Afghan election officials leave little room for criticism, Zabul province's security agencies, including the Afghan National Army and Police, performed outstanding in an impressive show of force as they kept insurgents at bay and seemed to secure the entire region by dotting the province with strategic checkpoints and security stations.

"We have secured the city and provided the people with a safe environment to vote in," said Col. Habib Khan, Zabul's anti-terrorism chief. "The enemy has had no effect on the elections and the day has been a big success. The enemy was unable to disrupt our democratic process."

The effectiveness of the security agencies was obvious in Zabul, once known as a safe haven for Taliban insurgents, seemed to

be void of their presence on election day.

Afghans in line waiting to vote seemed eager and anxious for their turn as those who had already cast their ballot and contributed to the future of Afghanistan waited for their friends outside showing off their purple index fingers demonstrating that they had participated in Afghanistan's first parliamentary elections.

Afghan women proudly display their ink-stained fingers after casting ballots in historic parliamentary elections Sep. 18 in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell, TF Bayonet Public Affairs)

mentary elections. The lines were long and were demographically diverse with men young and old who waited for long periods of time to have a say in the future of their country.

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Reality Check

By Staff Sgt. Bryan Dorman



THE PATRIOT

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The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for style, brevity and clarity.

Take pictures within your units. Look for unique shots that show your unit's mission and E-mail them to:

schultea@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

In the subject line, type "Photo Contest" and your name.

Include Name, Rank, Unit, Job Description and hometown of photographer. Also, provide in the caption - the date, location, unit mission and identify any troops.

Photo from the field

Spc. Joshua Balog, Combat Camera



Lt. Col. Neil Higgins of Combined Joint Task Force-76 watches for the dropzone over Forward Operating Base Salerno Sept. 8. CJTF-76 conducted a leaflet drop near FOB Salerno.

Across Afghanistan / CJTF-76

Who will ever forget September 11th?

Chaplain (Maj.) George Johnson, Jr.
CJTF-76 BaseOps Chaplain

Can you remember exactly what you were doing around 9:38 a.m. Eastern Time on September 11, 2001? Even without asking, most people can tell you precisely what they were doing and what they were thinking when they saw or heard about the four hijacked jetliners that hit the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon and the heroics of the passengers that caused the fourth plane to not reach its intended destination because of prematurely crashing in a field in Pennsylvania.

The indelible memories from September 11, 2001, are so pronounced that four years later people everywhere took time to participate in special remembrance activities. Even on the other side of the earth, people of all nations and nationalities gathered together in a

giant tent (clamshell) located at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, in remembrance. The occasion was the Combined Joint Task Force-76 Command September 11th Special Memorial Ceremony. A special occasion that commemorated one nation’s loss and the world’s resolve to never forget the helpless victims, the courageous service providers, and their love ones. Also, who will ever forget the lawless intent of the terrorists who perpetrated such a cowardly act?

This year, one day before the infamous day of September 11th, the Coalition soldiers and civilians here on Bagram Air Field joined the world in remembering the price that innocent people paid and sacrifices courageous people are willing to pay for the values that constitute the core of ‘freedom for all’. It was a spiritually moving experience for many to witness the Posting of the Colors, fervent prayers and Scripture readings, extraordinary

uplifting songs and cogent speakers who re-

minded us of the values that built and continues to rebuild our Great Nation. The unique videos “HOPE” and “IN THE WAITING” helped kindle a new resolve to never forget what happen on September 11th.

Who will ever forget September 11, 2001? If what occurred during the CJTF-76 Special Memorial Ceremony is indicative of the sentiments of the nations, the day of September 11th will be remembered in the hearts and minds of patriots of freedom much like the famous saying, “Remember the Alamo” speaks volumes to the patriots of our Nation.

God Bless America!



Those who made the Bagram ceremony happen. (U.S. Army photo)

Marine Commandant visits troops

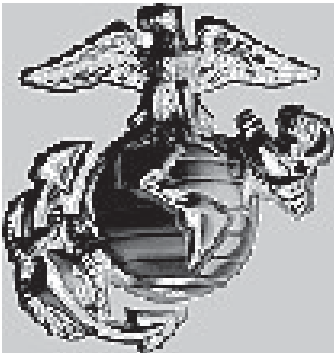
By Marine 1st Lt. Anthony DelSignore
Task Force Devil Public Affairs

SALERNO - General Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, along with Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited with Marines, Soldiers, sailors and airman in throughout eastern and southeastern Afghanistan Sept. 26-27.

The Commandant and Sergeant Major awarded Purple Hearts to 19 Marines, conducted combat promotion ceremonies for three Marines and recognized others nominated by their small unit leaders for stellar performance.

“Thank you all for your service both to the Corps and to the nation. I could not ask more of you or your family,” said Hagee. “What our parents and your grandparents did during World War II was change the course of history; now you are doing the same thing.”

They also took time for questions and photos with the Marines at each stop once the formal ceremonies were completed.



General Michael Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, visits the with Soldiers Sept. 26-27. (Photos by Marine Sgt. Christopher Tirado, Commandant Staff, Headquarters Marine Corps)



Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, talks with and answers questions of the deployed Marines Sept. 26.



Hagee awards a Marine the Purple Heart.



Hagee shakes the hand of a newly promoted Marine.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

SPORT radio first of kind for Afghans

Radio station educates Afghan people in East

Story and photo by
Spc. Mike Pryor
1-325th Public Affairs

WARDAK – People in Wardak like their radios. Ever since Combined Joint Task Force Soldiers began handing out free short-wave radios in the province last month, clusters of young men yelling “Radio! Radio!” show up wherever they go. Children run behind Humvees hoping someone tosses a radio out to them. Sometimes even Afghan policemen will slide up to one of the Soldiers and whisper, “Mister – radio?”

Yes, people in Wardak like their radios very much. And now, thanks to CJTF-76, they have their very own radio station, too.

Radio Rasul, is an Arabic word meaning “message,” is the first station of its kind. The Self Contained Portable Operational-level Radio Transmitter (SPORT) makes that station possible and is the first of its kind here. It is mobile radio station operated by CJTF-76 Information Operations cell that broadcasts music, news, public service announcement, and other information provided by the Wardak Provincial Government to the local population.

The radio station gives the government a way to promote itself and its programs to the local people, the majority of whom



Sgt. Jennifer Hahn, FM radio team chief, 44th Signal Battalion, tests her equipment in Wardak to record a message for broadcast on using the self portable contained portable operational-level radio transmitter (SPORT) for the radio station operated by CJTF-76 Information Operations.

don't read and don't have access to televisions, said Lt. Col. David Anders, Commander, 1-325 Parachute Infantry Regiment.

“(Radio Rasul) is for the benefit of the people of Wardak, to get the word out to a populace that is mostly illiterate,” Anders said.

The radio station made its first broadcast Sep. 16 and has been running from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day since then. It broadcasts over the FM bandwidth and has a range of 40 to 60 km. The mobile station can be used anywhere as long as it has a power source. The programming is pre-recorded and

then beamed out over the airwaves in a continuous loop.

Its format is a mixture of music and news. Traditional Afghan songs are interspersed with news updates, weather information, religious programming and messages from government officials.

One of the first officials to record a message for Radio Rasul was the provincial governor, Gov. Abdul Jabbar Naeemi. Having a radio station in Wardak has long been a top priority of his administration, Naeemi said.

Before becoming governor, Naeemi had been one of Afghan

President Hamid Karzai's most successful campaign managers. His experiences in politics taught him that a big factor in building support for the government is keeping the populace informed of its activities, he said.

“(Through the media), the people can be made aware of the government and the activities of the government officials. They can even be made aware of the mistakes of the government,” Naeemi said.

But when he became Governor, Naeemi found there was no

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First Women's Center opens in Paktika Province

Story and photo by
Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Task Force Devil Public Affairs

SHARAN – Another step toward equal rights for women in Afghanistan was made in the town of Sharan, Afghanistan, Sept. 15 with the opening of the first Women's Center in the Paktika Province.

The center, run by Sharifa Faqirzada, will offer women the chance to attend classes and get information regarding women's issues, like health and childbirth. Faqirzada is assisted by her daughter, Shaima, 21, who is a candidate running for the provincial Shura in the upcoming elections.

“This is one of the best signs of progress for females in Paktika,” said Shaima.

“The women will be able to come here and learn about various crafts, like sewing



Sharifa Faqirzada, leader of the Women's Affairs Center in the Paktika province, cuts the ribbon on the new Women's Affairs building in Sharan, Afghanistan Sept. 15. The center was built with money from the Sharan Provincial Reconstruction Team, whose commander, Lt. Col. Gordon Obermueller, stands to the left of Faqirzada.

and carpet making, so that they can make money too. We will also make trips out to villages to offer classes and seminars there.”

During the ribbon cutting ceremony, the

governor of Paktika, Gov. Gulab Mangal, expressed his approval of the center and applauded the progress the center represents.

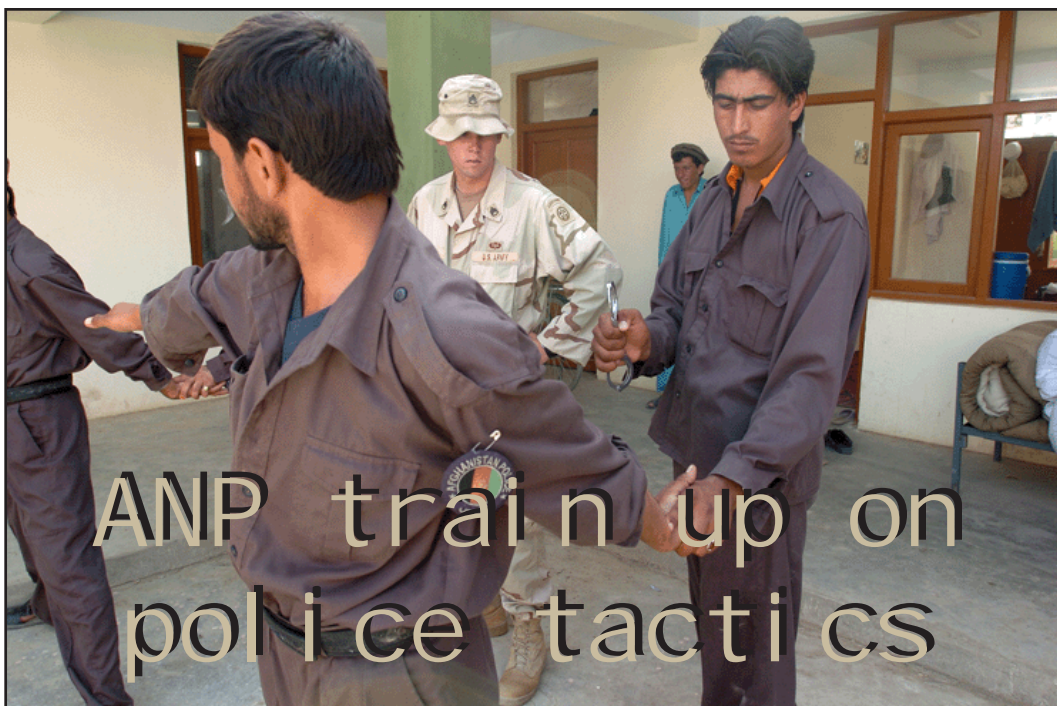
“This is yet another step towards improvement in Paktika and an important step toward freedom for women,” he said.

Construction of the center was started in mid-June and was finished Sept. 14. The Sharan Provincial Reconstruction Team contributed \$25,000 to the project.

“It is an honor to participate in the building of this center,” said Lt. Col. Gordon Obermueller, the PRT commander. “These sorts of projects really make it all worth while for us.”

The Women's Center was one of three ribbon cuttings that day and come just days before the historic parliamentary elections, scheduled for Sept. 18.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil



Afghan National Police officers practice handcuffing a detainee during training Sept. 3 at the Tani District police headquarters during training from the 82nd Military Police Company.

**Story and photos by
Sgt. Chuck Meseke**
*Task Force Devil Public
Affairs*

TANI - "No! Did I say to do anything yet? Did I say to grab his thumb?" yelled Sgt. Manuel Gonzalez, a military police officer with the 212th Military Police Company.

Gonzales and Soldiers from the 82nd Military Police Company were at the Tani District police headquarters teaching a refresher course of basic police techniques they had previously taught to the Afghan National Policemen. It was evident this group needed a refresher course, and the MPs were prepared for a long

day.

"We have been teaching them five critical skills, site security, personal security, handling of a detainee at the point of capture, convoy security operations and civil disturbance operations," said Capt. Carrick E. McCarthy, platoon leader with the 82nd MPs.

McCarthy and his Soldiers have been traveling to the different districts in the Khost Province training Afghan police officers in the tasks they are expected to face during the country's upcoming provincial elections and in the future. Their training will continue at least until the elections are over, McCarthy explained.

Col. Abdul Aziz Mangal, the commander of all police officers in Tani, said the training was very good for his officers.

"With the training

I am actually very optimistic on how the election security will go, this is very good for our officers. I like it," Mangal said.

Other officers hoped that the training would continue past the elections.

"All of this training is important for each police officer to know," said Capt. Rasol Marjan, who commands about 30 officers from Tani.

"We plan to train over these tasks for an hour each morning," Marjan said.

Despite the difficulties in training new officers that speak a different language, McCarthy said his troops are up to the job.

"As MPs, we do a lot of different missions. The training is a new one for us and it can get frustrating, but we see the importance of it if we ever want to leave Afghanistan secured," McCarthy said.

Sgt. Manuel Gonzalez, 212th Military Police Company, demonstrates how to quickly take down a resistant detainee to Afghan National Police officers Sept. 3 during training at the Tani District police headquarters. Sgt. Manuel Gonzalez demonstrates to Afghan National Police officers the proper use of force.



Afghan radio station big hit



Sgt. Jennifer Hahn, FM radio team chief, 44th Signal Battalion, uses her computer to digitally record the voice of minister Durka Durka in Wardak Sep. 13.

RADIO from Page 5

reliable method of informing the people of Wardak about the government's programs. There was no radio station, no TV and no newspaper. And the effect of their absence was obvious, he said.

"When I first arrived, there were people in some districts who were not aware of whom the Governor was, who the Coalition soldiers were. They were far away from modern life," he said.

He thought a radio station could help change that. A poor farmer who can't read or write who listens to the radio all day can become as informed as a college graduate, Naeemi said.

"In a way, they're much better educated than a person with a PhD in Kabul. They're (government) analysts," he said.

When CJTF-76 began operations in the area in July, Naeemi presented the idea to Anders. Anders said he would do his best to make it a reality.

Anders made a special request to have the equipment and a team from the 44th Signal Battalion brought in to install the antenna at the Falcons' Forward Operating Base. It took only seconds for Radio Rasul's first broadcast to reach radios all over Wardak, but the process of creating the programming took a bit longer.

It began with Sgt. Jennifer Hahn, her recording equipment and a cramped, little room in the basement of the Governor's office in Wardak.

Inside, Hahn, FM radio team chief, 44th Signal Battalion, and Capt. Jeffrey Giltzow, Red Falcon Civil-Military Operations officer, supervised the recordings of minute-long news and information segments by a parade of government officials and religious representatives.

"Without an interpreter it was like a three-ring circus in there. But we worked it all out," Giltzow said.

The recording session was an occasionally surreal collision of modern technology and tradition. At one point, a young cleric dressed in a turban and robes sang verses from the Koran into a microphone attached to Hahn's high-tech computer.

At 7 a.m. Sep. 16, those verses from the Koran were the first messages transmitted out of Radio rasul 45-foot high antenna inside FOB North. The radio waves reached out all over the province, including to areas where 1-325 paratroopers were busy conducting support operations for the provincial elections.

Although it is too soon to know what the lasting effects of the radio station will be, Naeemi has high hopes for the role it can play in Wardak's future.

"It can be a voice of the people," he said.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

Son follows father's footsteps in war

FATHER from Page 1

in the Ukraine, when the U.S.S.R. was at the height of its power. He became a soldier when he was 18. It was not his decision - military service was mandatory in the Soviet Union.

"I served because I had to serve. I had no choice. The faster I finished my service the faster I could go home," he said.

From 1982 - 1984 he served in the Soviet-Afghan War, driving armored personnel carriers on convoys near the Pakistan border. The war was raging, and he saw some of the worst of its brutality during his service there.

"What I have to go through is not nearly as difficult as what he went through," said Aleksey Jr. "It was bloodier. His convoys were ambushed all the time. It was basically like ducks in a row. If you were lucky you weren't one of the ones who got shot that day."

After he was discharged, Aleksey Sr., returned to his hometown in the Ukraine to get married and raise a family. Aleksey Jr. was born a year later and another son two years after that.

The family lived in Sverdlovsk, a tiny farming village in Eastern Ukraine with a population of only a few hundred.

"You blink, and you'll miss it," said Aleksey Jr.

The Butkovs lived in the same house Aleksey Sr.'s father had built with his bare hands. It had no heat, no electricity, no running water, and no indoor plumbing. The family grew much of what they ate in their garden.

When communism fell in the 1990's, it didn't bring the opportunities everyone expected. Work was scarcer than ever, and the Butkovs worried about what kind of future their children would have. They had relatives living in the U.S., and the family decided to move there. They were chasing the American Dream, Aleksey Jr. said.

"My parents understood that it was better to live in the states. In the U.S., you can have anything if you're willing to work for it," he said.

The family settled in Portland, Oregon in 1994, when Aleksey Jr. was in the third grade. His father eventually found work as a truck driver, putting the skills he learned in the Russian Army to use.

Aleksey Jr. grew up as a typi-



Pfc. Alexey "Alex" Butkov, 19, from Portland, OR, a paratrooper with B Co, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, pulls guard at the edge of his platoon's compound in Logar Province in September, 2005.

cal American kid. He became so Americanized that when he visited his hometown as a teenager, he felt out of place.

"I realized I didn't belong in the Ukraine anymore," he said.

One place he did feel he belonged was in the U.S. Army. The excitement of the soldier's life appealed to him, and he felt the experience would help him to get a job as a police officer in the future. But there was something else.

In the back of his head, Aleksey Jr., wanted to be a soldier to satisfy the curiosity his father's silence had left him with.

"I was always curious about the conflict (in Afghanistan). I asked my dad a lot of questions, but all he'd say is, 'It was no good.' Maybe he didn't want to answer the questions then because he thought I was too immature," he said.

In March 2003, Aleksey Jr., enlisted in the Army. He spent two years in the reserves before reclassifying for active duty as a paratrooper with the 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, and 82nd Airborne Division. Three days after joining the unit, he learned he was deploying.

"When I heard we were getting deployed, I was hoping it would be to Afghanistan," he said.

It was. Aleksey Jr.'s battalion was sent to Afghanistan in July of 2005 to bolster security in advance of the September provincial elections. His platoon is based near the small town of Puli Alam in the eastern province of Logar.

Since arriving in Afghanistan, Aleksey Jr., has seen reminders of his father's war everywhere. Broken down Russian vehicles line the roads he drives along every day. He was excited the first time he saw an old armored personnel carrier like

the one his father used to drive.

"I can't wait to go back and talk to my dad and show him pictures of where I've been," he said.

Even though this is his first deployment, in some ways it's as if Aleksey Jr.'s whole life has been preparing him for it.

On patrols through the dusty little town of Puli Alam, he is often reminded of his hometown of Sverdlovsk. Sights that strike other members of his platoon as primitive - meat hanging on hooks outside in the sun, the commotion of the bazaar, women and children drawing water from a well - evoke fond memories for him.

"It seems strange to them, but I grew up with that," he said.

Aleksey Jr. also has the advantage of his father's wisdom. When he calls home, he and his dad don't talk about how friends are doing or

which team is headed to the playoffs, they talk about the best way to avoid Improvised Explosive Devices on the road. Gone are the days when Aleksey Sr. wouldn't discuss his war experiences with his son. Now, he gives him all the tips he can.

As a veteran, Aleksey Sr. didn't want his son to go to war. But now that Aleksey Jr. is in Afghanistan, he hopes he can gain something positive from it.

"I didn't want him to go, because there's no good there . . . There's no difference. It's the same war," he said. "But I'm proud of him. The experience is good. He will learn what it means to serve."

Like his father before him, Aleksey Jr. misses his family and his wife, Luda, and can't wait to return to them.

"My heart is at home. Every time I'm away I realize how special they are," he said.

But unlike his father, Aleksey Jr. volunteered for his mission, and believes in what he is trying to accomplish.

"I hope we make a difference. I'm glad we're helping (the Afghans) to have a life where they have a choice and aren't just told what to do," he said.

His son's optimism may even have checked Aleksey Sr.'s cynicism a little. He now sees a glimmer of a future for Afghanistan.

"The Russians couldn't help Afghanistan, maybe the Americans can," he said.

Needed generator given to hospital



2nd Lt. Andrew Stipp, Provost Marshall officer for 13th Military Police Company (Airborne), and Lt. Col. Lowell Larson, Combined Joint Task Force-76 Surgeon Cell special projects officer, present the Parwan Governor with paperwork to hand over a generator for the Charikar hospital Sept. 20. The generator was purchased for the hospital in Kabul from a local vendor with funds from the Commanders Emergency Relief Program. The generator will give the hospital efficient power to take better care of their patients and help the Afghan doctors take care of their own people. (Photo by Sgt. Tara Teel, CJTF-76 Public Affairs)

Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet

Keeping KAF connected

Story and photos by Pfc. Vincent Fusco
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD – Signal Soldiers are people people. Through telephone and computer networking, the Soldiers of the 807th and 580th Signal Companies are keeping the people of Kandahar Airfield connected.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Efrain Acevedo, a native San Juan, Puerto Rico, a Reservist and his fellow Soldiers of the 807th Sig. Co. here in Afghanistan are working to provide Internet, NIPR, SIPR and telephone access for Coalition forces.

“He’s in charge of running that cabling, and I’m in charge of making it hot,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Gilbert Acevedo, a Wilmington, Del., native who discovered he and Efrain were second cousins.

Gilbert is the non-commissioned officer in charge of the direct signal support team from the 580th Sig. Co., 25th Signal Battalion, Qatar, the only permanent party unit stationed in theater.

The airfield has approximately 3,100 network users and 500

phones in use. Gilbert and his team of 32 civilian contractors are responsible for activating and maintaining the systems provided by Efrain and his 60 Soldiers based here, in Kabul, Bagram and Karshi-Kahanabad, Uzbekistan.

“The Soldiers are truly professionals,” said Efrain. “This is their job in civilian life.”

The present focus for both units is the installation of CENTRIX, the communication protocol for multi-national forces working with the Coalition and the International Security Assistance Force.

CENTRIX is at forefront of communication efforts needed to be completed before ISAF occupies the area, said Gilbert.

Efrain’s Soldiers also provided network support for fire bases in the cities of Qalat and Tarin Kowt.

“They jump in a chopper, stay for three or four weeks, finish the job and come back,” said Efrain.

Gilbert and his team authorize communications usage based on operational capacity. He stresses that his work “is a business plain and simple,” and he, Efrain and their Soldiers work any means necessary to meet the needs of the entire operation.

“There’s two Acevedos and there’s two answers,” said Gilbert. “You tell him no and you have to tell me yes, you tell me no and you have to tell him yes.”

The results of the combined efforts over the last year with 10 miles of fiber optic and copper cabling strung over more than 200 poles and better, faster service with a new technical control facility.

“Since January, I’ve seen so many changes in this place,” said Gilbert. “[Former 25th Sig. Bn.] Command Sgt. Maj. [Donald G.] Manly said he’s seen more progress in six months than in the past year he’s been here.”

While both companies provided the phone system for the morale, welfare and recreation center, and wired the 25 computers in the education center, strategic communications support remains their primary mission.

“The next big project is to support [Kellogg, Brown and Root],” said Gilbert. “We need to get phones out there.”

To establish communications to the contracting facility, a proposed pole line is being favored over buried cable, which can be accidentally dug up and destroyed.

“We don’t bury cable anymore,” said Gilbert. “It gets too fragile.”

Efrain and his Soldiers are expected to receive certificates of appreciation from 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, and base operations for their efforts here.

In a Reserve unit made up of about 70 percent Puerto Ricans and 30 percent cross-level Soldiers from the United States, Efrain takes note of his Soldiers’ “real bond, like brothers and sisters.”

“It doesn’t matter who we are, the Soldiers team up so well,” said Efrain. “It’s one team, one fight, like they say.”



Kandahar Province governor Khalid Asadullah, left, and Col. Kevin Owens, Combined Task Force Bayonet commander, meets with a district leader Sept. 16 in Kandahar Province.

Election security a success in review

Story and photos by Pfc. Vincent Fusco
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR CITY – The facts are in and the vote is yes: parliamentary elections in Kandahar Province were a smooth, secure operation thanks to Afghan Security Forces working through the Joint Coordination Center.

The week before the Sept. 18 elections, representatives from the Coalition, Afghan National Army and Police, highway patrol, and the National Directorate of Security took extra steps to make sure the community and security forces were prepared.

“The basic mission of the JCC was to ensure all Afghan security forces were working together to maintain a safe environment for the election,” said Army Capt. Wayne Ehmer, the officer in charge of the JCC from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment.

The JCC formed a security plan that included the management of over 200 polling centers in the province.

Checkpoints and outposts kept a current intelligence picture for the JCC to track, and the provincial reaction force performed joint rehearsals to test their readiness.

“Basically, if anything happens in the province, we know about it,” said Ehmer.

On Sept. 16, Army Lt. Col. Bert Ges, Task Force Gun Devil commander, 3-319th and Kandahar Province governor Khalid Asadullah toured outlying villages to meet with district leaders and hear their concerns about the election and other matters.

The visits also allowed the Coalition to conduct pre-election inspections of the voting sites and gather support to ensure a safe and secure environment, said Ges.

“[Asadullah] was very pleased with the whole setup,” Ges said. “This was a synchronized effort between the Joint Election Management Board, local security and the Kandahar JCC.”

Polling sites in Kandahar City were given a final check Sept. 17 by the Kandahar Provincial Reaction Force, a team of ANA soldiers operating out of the JCC.

“We wanted to do an on-the-ground assessment and confirm the location of the polling sites,” said Army 1st Lt. Christian Stone, the officer in charge of the PRF from Headquarters and Headquarters Company,

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(Above) Spc. Jeremy Bowers works to secure new telephone and network cables to the conduits of the technical control facility on KAF. (Right) Army Spc. Jeremy Bowers, a cable and wire system installer with the 807th Signal Company, works to secure and install new telephone and network cables on Kandahar Airfield Sept. 15.



Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet



U.S. and Coalition Soldiers show ANA soldiers how to move during close-quarters combat during training in Kandahar Sept. 18.

**Story and photos by
Pfc. Vincent Fusco**
*TF Bayonet Public
Affairs*

KANDAHAR—An Afghan National Army soldier takes off shuffling across the dirt, brandishing his AK-47, ready to engage whatever steps in front of him. “Stop!” The instructor calls out. “Let’s work on getting in place first.”

This soldier and his comrades of the Kandahar City Provincial Reaction

Force are learning the fundamentals of close quarters combat and room clearing. Though eager to learn, some of the soldiers need time to learn the abbreviated training

“We kind of skipped the crawl-walk-run technique and went right into the



(Above) ANA soldiers listen to the interpreter explain the lesson. (Left) ANA soldiers gather in to see how to hold an AK-47 in a tight space.

room clearing technique,” said Army 1st

Lt. Christian Stone, the officer in charge of the PRF from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

On every day but Friday, Stone and Army 1st Sgt. Charles Scott Werley, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the PRF from HHC, 173rd, work with the force to teach basic soldiering skills.

“The ANA are used to having commanding officers train them,” said Werley. “I have 19 years experience, so [Stone and I] became that part of the equation.”

They worked to establish an NCO corps, assign squad leaders and teach the ANA sergeants how to inspect their soldiers for water and ammunition.

The force was primed for room clearing training by learning basic and close-quarters marksmanship in an urban environment.

“The training is fundamentals of infantry tactics,” said Werley, whose previous mission experience includes Operation Just Cause in Panama with the 1st Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

The area of Kandahar City is a combination of rural and urban environments, said Stone. The training gives the soldiers a chance to become more familiar with how to move and fight while being aware of the things around them.

“It’s difficult for them to learn sometimes because we’ll give them a sit-down period to do the basics,” said Stone. “Some don’t pay attention and they’re lost in the training. So we give a briefing, go out and do it, then cover a review. The part they get most out of is actually doing it.”

Stone and Werley found themselves adapting their American methods of training to fit an Afghan mold. They discovered that even a safety switch on the AK-47 markedly different from the

M16 can change they way they teach the class.

“The M16 has a switch you can select with your thumb,” said Werley. “But with the AK-47, you have to take your hand off the grip a bit to switch it.”

“Do things go as smoothly as you want? No,” said Werley. “It’s something you smooth out when you do international training. Even with American troops, different units do different things.”

The time and effort put into teaching the force is paying off: it paid off during visits to the polling sites before Sept. 18.

“We didn’t have to say anything and they fell straight into things,” said Werley.

The visits gave the force a chance to practice their security skills, said Stone. At each stop, the soldiers dismounted from the truck, established a security perimeter around each site and watched for suspicious people.

Despite problems in translation, Stone and Werley are dedicated to teaching the force how to become better, faster soldiers in their own right.

“These guys are a dedicated response team in Kandahar Province,” said Werley. “They need to learn to constantly train to be an effective fighting force.”

ANA make elections a success



Soldiers of the Kandahar Provincial Reaction Force secure a polling site in Kandahar City Sept. 17.

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173rd Airborne Brigade.

Each polling site needed to have voting materials ready, and those in charge of the sites knew what to do in the event of a contingency.

Most of the polling sites were boys and girls’ schools that had ANP security in place even before the election, said Stone.

“It’s the Afghans who took charge of the process,” said Ehmer.

On Sept. 18, as the greater population cast their vote, the joint effort successfully secured a weapons cache in Panjwayi District. Caches were also found in Talukhan and a total of 14 suspected insurgents were detained.

Villages of Minashin, Ghorak and Shah Wali Kot, areas that were considered a Taliban safe haven four or five months ago, reported a higher voter turnout after election day than the presidential elections two years ago.

Initial reports indicated a total voter turnout of more than 50 percent, but a lower total number of voters than those of the presidential election.

“I think some people had trouble understanding what parliamentary elections were,” Ges reasoned. “This was an offset year for the election.”

Ehmer reasoned that it was the combined cooperation of the JCC and everyone’s immediate, decisive responses to the minor incidents in the province that achieved the election’s quiet results.

“This organization kept the wolves at bay,” said Ehmer. “I think it’s a pilot program for the other provinces to emulate.”



(Top Left) An ANA soldier moves into place during close-quarters combat in Kandahar City Sept. 18. (Bottom left) 1st Lt. Christian Stone watches the ANA soldiers practice clearing their weapons before close-quarters training.

Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet

Operation LAZARUS brings hope to Kandahar villages

Story and photo by
Sgt 1st Class Stephen Lum
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR — Like any good meal, the key is the gathering and blending of ingredients. Gathering the ingredients of a successful Village Medical Outreach in the Kandahar Province this September were Army 1st Lt. J. Scott Donoughe and Staff Sgt. John Newland, Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division.

The paratroopers from Task Force Gun Devil assembled a team of Coalition medical, engineer, civil affairs, psychological operations and security personnel for a nine-day VMO mission in Southern Afghanistan named Operation Lazarus.

Coalition medical practitioners over the next few days included a Romanian and Canadian physician, two U.S. physician assistants, four U.S. medics, a U.S. dental technician, a Romanian dentist and a U.S. civilian veterinarian, said Donoughe, the project officer in charge from Loretto, Pa.

“The recipe to the successful VMOs was the building trust by holding weekly meetings,” said Newland, the 492nd Civil Affairs Battalion noncommissioned officer in charge attached to the 319th. “When we first came to some of these outlying areas, some villagers were throwing rocks. Regular visits were met with smiling faces of hope.”

“Conditions improved as the mission progressed,” said Capt. David Gann, a physicians assistant with Company C (Medical), 173rd Support Battalion. “Our first few days were open air ‘treatment rooms.’ Later we were able set up our litters and mobile dental chairs in school rooms and meeting halls.”

“We saw 1,405 medical and 49 dental pa-

tients,” said Donoughe, who serves as the TF Gun Devil surgeon. “The medical patients included 539 males, 358 females and 508 children.”

The majority of patients suffer from poor nutrition and bad sanitation, said Newland, a nurse in civilian life.

“Eye and ear infections, burns, aches and pains, we saw it all,” said Gann, from Savannah, Tenn. “Common treatments were daily vitamins, pain killers, antibiotics, eye drops and topical ointments.”

“The pharmaceuticals were bought from local vendors using CERP funds,” adds Newland. “The Commander’s Emergency Response Program purchases help to stimulate the local economy and provide the patients with medications they are familiar with.”

Romanian dentist 1st Lt. Dana Abradan and Sgt. Julio Caramona, a Co. C dental technician from Levitown, Puerto Rico, pulled more than a dozen teeth during the mission.

The United State Department of Agriculture provided the veterinarian and engineer consultants. While the USDA vet Gerald Ramkisson treated more than 260 animals in two days, Alan Wood identified several projects to be submitted for approval. Proposed future aid missions include the placement of two windmills for water pumping.

“While the medical practitioners were treat-



Staff Sgt. John Newland, from the 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, prescribes medications to an Afghan family in Kandahar Province.

ing patients,” said Newland, “Civil Affairs and PSYOPS personnel met with the local populace and distributed voting and security flyers, some toys and dental hygiene products. The toys and hygiene products were donations sent from individuals and organizations from the U.S.”

Operation Lazarus was not without its problems, there were vehicle breakdowns and remnants of Opium processing at a few of the compounds. Both issues are being addressed for future VMOs.

“Overall the operation should be viewed as a large success,” concluded Newland. “There is a continuing need for this type of operation. We are recommending vaccination program. More than 20 percent of the children die from childhood diseases before age 5 and most of it is easily prevented.”

“These missions also provide the Coalition forces an excellent opportunity to aid the local population,” added Donoughe. “The VMO team hopes their presence and treatment gives the local population a feeling of security and care from the Coalition forces which will help them strive toward an independent, free and secure life.”

Election success in South for Task Force Bayonet



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“We are very proud,” said ANP Maj. Matin, of the criminal investigation department, who goes by one name. “Not only because we have defeated the Taliban today and provided security, but because we have demonstrated we are a true democracy. I am very proud.”

Although U.S. forces kept a low profile during the historic event, they received praise from Khan for helping them reach this milestone.

“It is because of [Americans] that we were able to achieve this today,” said Khan. “It is with their help that we got to this point and it will be because of our continued partnership that we will move forward to the day when we will achieve ultimate success.”

As the polls closed and the Afghan authorities transported the ballots to the counting station in Qalat, the anxiety about insurgent activity had transformed into anxiousness as the Afghan people wait for the results of their historic first parliamentary elections.

The success of the election is clear to everyone involved in the process.

“The elections went very well,” said Jeton Ujkani, the United Nation’s count manager for the province. “The whole world knows they have held democratic elections.”

For many Afghans the elections represent more than a change of government.

“Today we have democracy,” said Rahmatullah, an Afghanistan National Army pilot who flew ballots from remote voting stations to the provincial counting center in Qalat. “With these elections we have stepped through a door that will lead us to the future.”

An Afghan election monitor validates a voter registration card in Moraqkhja village while the voter waits for his ballot. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ken Denny, Freedom Watch)

What's Happening / News You Can Use

Help Louisiana, Mississippi military families affected by Hurricane Katrina

Citizens Helping Heroes announced today that it has launched a targeted campaign to help the families of National Guardsmen currently serving in Iraq who have been left homeless by Hurricane Katrina. Monies raised will go directly to the families of those service members deployed overseas, who live in the Gulf Region.

To donate, please visit:

www.citizenshelpingheroes.org

for detailed information. In Louisiana and Mississippi, the states hit hardest by the hurricane, up to 40 percent of their National Guard troops are on active duty in Iraq.

While the National Guard at home has been taking part in rescue operations and law enforcement, some 6,000 members of the Louisiana and Mississippi Guard have been forced to watch the catastrophe from 7,000 miles away in Iraq.

As Americans largely focus on the civilian families devastated by Hurricane Katrina, CHH wants to ensure that families of those so bravely fighting on our behalf are supported.

The organization is encouraging citizens to remember that Katrina is an added hardship to military families already facing financial and emotional difficulties.

Info on hurricane assistance

MILITARY ONESOURCE: 1-800-342-9647 Any military members or families in need of counseling services or Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Service Centers may call the Military OneSource number above or visit their website www.militaryonesource.com.

MILITARY FAMILY LOCATOR: 1-888-777-7731 The web site www.MilitaryFamilyLocator.org has been set up to collect status and location information from military family members affected and/or displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Submit your unit's story to The Patriot

Tell the whole CJOA what your unit is doing.

The Patriot is always on the lookout for amateur journalists and photographers who have a story to tell.

Send your stories to:

schultea@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

Stand alone photos are also welcome.

Remember when submitting stories and photos to remember the five W's of journalism: who, what, where, when and why.

Also include full names, rank and units of troops involved and of the author.

Stories will be edited for content and to meet journalistic standards.

Free Stuff! The Patriot will feature a web site per issue which offers free stuff for service members.

Have your commander sign up for mugs for unit troops.

<http://www.appreciateourtroops.org/forourtroops.shtml>

For the lowest airfare available.

<http://bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html>



COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN—OVERSEAS

...Making a World of Difference

That time of year again! You can make a difference!

Preparations for the Department of Defense 2005 combined Federal Campaign Overseas (CFC-O) are underway.

Canvassing overseas organization requires advance planning to effectively manage numerous administrative and logistical CFC challenges.

The biggest challenges this year is that CFC-O will again include the deployed forces in CENTCOM's area of operation. Per DoDI number 5035.5, "CFC-O will include all members of the Armed Forces and DoD civilian employees assigned to organizations and units of the above DoD combatant commands and activities, including those who are deployed due to the presence of United States forces overseas and temporary, part-time or intermittent personnel, who are located overseas.

This year's campaign will run from 17 Oct. through Dec. 15.

To visit the CFC Homepage, go to www.cfcoverseas.org.



Points of contact regarding the CFC-Overseas Campaign for CJTF-76 is Sgt. Maj. Donald Johnson, Component Campaign Manager for CFC-O, at 231-4101, JohnsonD@cjtf76.centcom.mil, and Staff Sgt. Susanna Chavez, Project Officer for CFC-O, at 231-4023, chavezS@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

The CFC Story

With a tradition of commitment through the selfless efforts of federal employees the CFC has its roots in the many charitable campaigns of the early 1960's. Seeing a need to bring the diversity of fundraising efforts under one umbrella, federal employees created the CFC – one campaign, once a year. By allowing employees to select organizations of their choice from a single brochure and to make their contributions through payroll deductions, the CFC opened the door to more opportunities for generous giving to literally hundreds of worthy causes. An executive order made the CFC a reality, and turned an innovative idea into a uniquely effective way for federal employees to help those in need across our community and throughout the world. The CFC is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the federal work-place on behalf of charitable organizations. It continues to be the largest and most successful work-place fundraising model in the world.